



Department of Justice

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FOUR DEFENDANTS INDICTED IN NIGERIAN 'ADVANCE-FEE' FRAUD SCAM

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Four defendants have been indicted on federal charges of running an “advance-fee” scheme that targeted U.S. victims with promises of millions of dollars, including money from an estate and from a lottery, Assistant Attorney General Alice S. Fisher of the Criminal Division and U.S. Attorney Roslynn R. Mauskopf of the Eastern District of New York announced today.

Three of the defendants named in the 11-count indictment – two of whom were Nigerian citizens residing in the Netherlands – were arrested in Amsterdam by Dutch authorities on February 21, 2006, based on a criminal complaint filed in the United States. They are being held by the Dutch authorities pending extradition to the United States. The fourth defendant, also a Nigerian citizen, is a fugitive.

Nnamdi Chizuba Anisiobi (a.k.a Yellowman, Abdul Rahman, Michael Anderson, Edmund Walter, Helmut Schkingner, Nancy White, Jiggaman and Namo), Anthony Friday Ehis (a.k.a John J. Smith, Toni N. Amokwu and Mr. T), Kesandu Egwuonwu (a.k.a KeKe, Joey Martin Maxwell, David Mark) and John Doe 1 (a.k.a Eric Williams, Lee, Chucks and Nago) are charged with one count of conspiracy, eight counts of wire fraud and one count of mail fraud. Anisiobi is also charged with one count of bank fraud. The indictment was returned by a federal grand jury in Brooklyn, New York yesterday.

As part of a massive advance-fee scheme, the defendants allegedly sent spam e-mail to thousands of potential victims in which they falsely claim to have control of millions of dollars located in a foreign country that belongs to an individual with a terminal illness. The defendants allegedly solicited the help of the potential victims to collect and distribute the funds to charity. In exchange for the victims’ help, the defendants allegedly promised the victims a share of a large inheritance, and inform the victims that they must pay a variety of advance fees for legal representation, taxes or bogus documentation. After the victims wire-transfer funds to pay the “required fees,” the defendants do not deliver the funds as promised. The victims lost more than \$1.2 million.

“The defendants in this scheme allegedly fleeced many unsuspecting American victims with promises of charitable contributions and personal riches,” said Assistant Attorney General Fisher. “We cannot allow these scam artists to prey on innocent

victims in this country, and we will work across the globe to knock out these fraudulent get-rich-quick schemes.”

“Global fraudsters need to know that we are determined to find and prosecute them,” said U.S. Attorney Mauskopf. “Potential victims need to know that any email offering millions of dollars that requires that they send money to receive this windfall is a scheme. Delete it.”

The investigation was initiated by Dutch authorities. After identifying victims in the United States, Dutch authorities notified the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, which opened its own investigation. Dutch authorities, as part of “Operation Dutch Treat,” arrested three of the defendants on a criminal complaint filed in the Eastern District of New York.

The maximum penalty for mail and wire fraud is 20 years in prison, and the maximum sentence for bank fraud is 30 years in prison. The conspiracy charge carries a maximum penalty of five years in prison.

The case was investigated by the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, and prosecuted by Fraud Section Senior Litigation Counsel Richard Weidis, Trial Attorney Mary (Kit) Dimke and Assistant U.S. Attorney Tanya Hill of the Eastern District of New York.

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